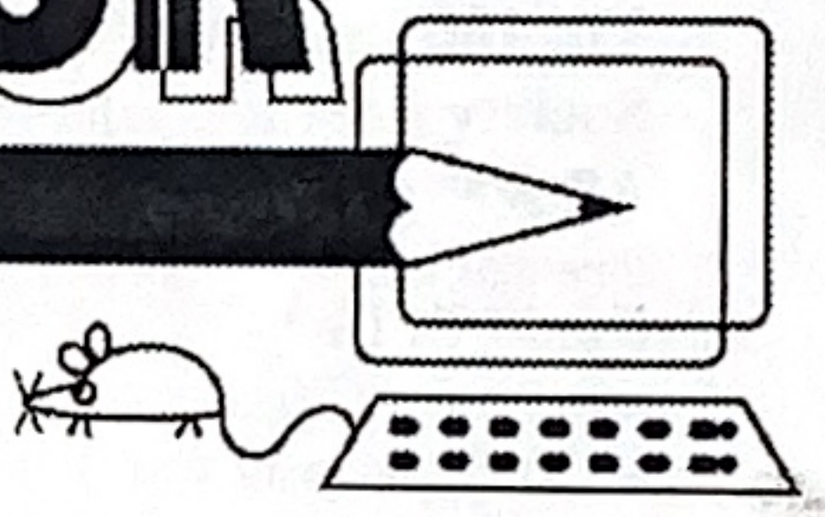
ASIFA EAST

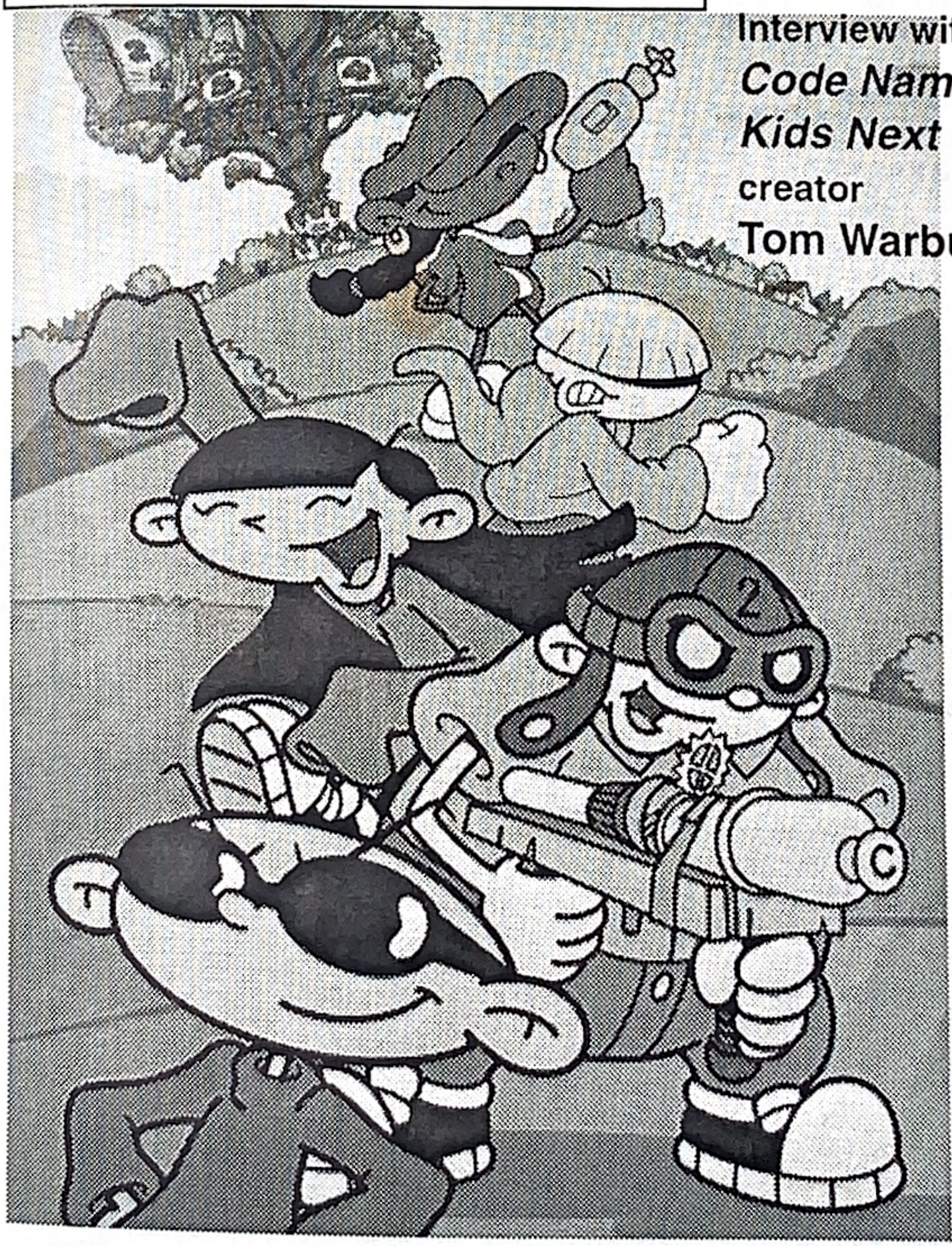
The International Animated Film Society

ANYMATOR

February 2003 Issue



ASIFA EAST FESTIVAL ENTRY FORM INSIDE !



Interview with
Code Name: Kids Next Door
creator
Tom Warburton

ASIFA East

The International Animated Film Society Northeast /New York Chapter

A Program of the New York Foundation For The Arts

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News from Augenblick Studios

HOUSE ARREST
Our latest freelance project is "House Arrest", a fully animated 22 minute pilot for Comedy Central. Apostle Pictures (Denis Leary's production company) is producing. The show features animated depictions of various comedians comedy routines. Janeane Garafalo, Jeffery Ross, and Denis Leary all make appearances in the pilot.

PLUGS MCGINNISS, SEEING EYE DOG
Our latest independent project is "Plugs McGinniss, Seeing Eye Dog". It is a fully animated 3 minute comedic short. It is written, directed, and animated by me. It follows the adventures of an alcoholic seeing eye dog and his blind master on a day trip to the post office. The film will publicly premiere at the Annapolis Film Festival [February 21-23, 2003] along with screenings of "Drunky" and "Ramblin Man". The film will be viewable on the

FREE LIFE DRAWING CLASSES

For ASIFA-East members and students at SVA 141 W. 21st St. Room 603 (
From 7:00-9:30 PM
on Thursday nights

Any questions?
Contact Toni Tysen
(212) 586-8662

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT DAVID B. LEVY

That pivotal moment is almost upon us. No, I'm not talking about another cloned baby from the Raelians. I'm not talking about the impending conclusion to *Joe Millionaire* (although I have an idea for a show called, *Joe Earning A Living Working In NY Animation*). Give up? I'm talking about the Asifa-East Judging-nights. I've got to tell you, the Asifa-festival is really special. Other festival juries consist of 5 or 6 people who are told ahead of time what the festival is looking for. They pick the films that work within those guidelines and then those films might get nixed or others may be picked by the festival director. That's all well and good and perhaps even contributes to the character of those festivals, like a brand identity. But, if you're looking for democracy in your festival screening process, then Asifa-East is it. Our jury is YOU. You sit and judge your peers that are sitting right next to you.

There are always surprises on judging night. Who could forget the ever popular film, *Color Bars & Tone* or the perennial, *Not Cued Up*. My personal favorite was *No Signal*. Oh, the memories. That's the proof that we don't prescreen the tapes. We're all seeing the films for the first time, unless of course, its your film. A memorable judging moment occurred for me when my film *Snow Business* (1998) was screened. I was sitting in front of Toni Peters, unbeknownst to him. Just before my film ran, I heard him exclaim, "Oh, I hope this is good....he's such a nice boy!" I for one, relish the treat of having the instant response from a critical audience. A critical audience must be won over. Despite who you are or who you're not, your film must speak for you. That's democratic.... and that's the thrill. Its so electric that you sometimes hear the audience burst into spontaneous discussion of the film they just saw. Often times you'll hear, "that wasn't animation" or "give me back my popcorn!" I say, settle it on the ballots. Until then, save me the aisle seats.

****Exact judging dates for this year TBA. Stay tuned!*

Lastly, make a note of our new Asifa-East mailing address below:

Asifa-East
C/O Michael Sporn Animation, Inc.
35 Bedford Street
NYC, NY 10014

A new Queens Public Access Television series called **28:30** is looking for talented individuals to submit animated shorts. They can be as short as 30 seconds or as long as 20 minutes, and sent in digital video format to:

Julie Epstein
c/o Blue's Clues
1633 Broadway, 4th floor
New York, NY 10019

If you are interested in learning more about this show, email julie.epstein@nick.com. Submitted shorts are not guaranteed to make it into the series due to time restrictions, but we'll try to get in as many as possible. Videos are also not guaranteed to be returned, but if you would like them back, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Drawn From Life: Animator's Stories.

VIEW POINT AIEM

By Rich Gorey

I've loved animation all my life, and from childhood, I knew I wanted to work in the field, even though- at that time- I didn't quite know what was involved, or how I might accomplish this unlikely goal. As time went by and I grew older, I eventually did manage to earn something of a living in the field, (such as it was) and recently, when I re-joined ASIFA, I came to understand that the journey I took, with all its ups and downs, was a shared journey. It's been exhilarating to come into contact with others who share my love for animation, but it's also been eye-opening to hear them talk about their frustrations and disappointments along the way. There's some truth to the adage that doing the thing you love for a LIVING can rob some of the fun out of the enterprise. I'm sure we can all recall our early experiments with film or flip books: that curious, inexplicable thrill when we first saw something we created move on its own. Unfortunately, we at ASIFA can also recall those moments when our choices seemed to betray us- when we saw the industry take some frightening turns- when we may have asked ourselves, "Have I made the right decisions?" Very few people, I've discovered, ever got rich from animation. Lately, the industry seems to be suffering from a significant transitional period. Jobs are hard to find, salaries are being cut, even at studios like Disney, and the trend towards computer graphics has left many of us reeling, wondering what ever happened to drawing and draftsmanship. Are they even valued anymore, these days when nearly anyone can create movement with a mouse and some software?

It's natural, at certain points during your career, to stop and take stock. It's even healthy to look at the industry objectively, and to question trends and styles that may not be to our liking. But it's also healthy to get back into that space in our heads we once lived with: the place where the love of animation, and the thrill of it, were the primary motivating factors. Before the clients, and the deadlines, and the layoffs and the criticisms our work is so often subject to compromised the joy for some of us. Can you remember that film, or person, that inspired you? That time in your life when animation was nothing but fun? I asked some of my fellow ASIFA members to talk about their influences, and I got some striking responses. What a delight it was to peruse these for the first time. Enjoy!

I'll go first:
I'll never forget seeing "101 Dalmatians" in the theaters when I was a child. It terrified and thrilled me. The space between the screen and my personal experience disappeared for me, and I believed every frame of it. Cruella DeVil was (unfortunately) like so many of the people in my young life. She screamed a lot and seemed to come and go as she pleased. The movie presented a very stylized and colorful version of reality, but one that nonetheless hit close to home. I had nightmares for weeks afterwards, and even now, when I see that film, I am transported back to the Glen Oaks theater in Queens, New York (long gone now-- it's a Duane Reade). The film has lost none of its power to hold me and move me, even as an adult. But that night was special for me for another reason as well. It's one of the last memories I have of my mother, who died shortly thereafter. There's something primal and resonant about that night at the movies: a pivotal moment in my life that became a touchstone in my childhood. Years later, perhaps trying to recapture that feeling and those sensations, I told my family, "I want to be an animator. I'm going to go to animation school." "Ha," they said. "What kind of a job is that? Who earns a living as an animator?"
They missed the point. My intention-- my goal, my passion-- was to create something that would generate the same feeling I had that long-ago night: the wonder and the terror and the closeness of my parents, who kept me safe both during and afterwards. When, later in life, I started to draw and express myself through animation, it was, in a way, a tool to bring that event- and the memory of my mother- closer to me again. At least I got it. Those around me didn't. "A degree in ANIMATION?" they said, disbelief etched on their faces. "Why don't you just go after a degree in basket weaving, for the love of Mike? It'll be just as much use to you." Well, I showed them, didn't I? Okay, maybe I didn't. But when "101 Dalmatians" came out on DVD, I was the first on line.
Rich Gorey
Deadbeat, animation fan, Director of Muerte.

Tony Peters, ASIFA member from way back and well-known artist and writer, had this to say:
"I've been told that even as a child I wanted to be an artist. (Candy [Kugel] has regaled me with countless stories from her childhood- I don't even remember what I did yesterday.) My artistic influences were the then-revolutionary UPA, the children's book authors and illustrators Alice and Martin Provinson, and the Jay Ward's Rocky and Bullwinkle et. al.-- the triumph of wit and brilliant writing over barely adequate animation. (The design was pretty good, though.)
But the one, most important, and lasting influence on my artistic career was Arthur Gardner Rankin, Jr. He was the only employer (if you don't count the United States Army) I ever had, and he taught me to be quick and efficient and he encouraged me to be clever and economical. I don't recall ever seeing him draw, and I don't think he ever art-directed my work, but he was an excellent producer and businessman.
Arthur hired me right out of art school (Parsons School of Design) entirely on the basis of a book I had hand set in type and illustrated with linoleum cuts, to operate his hot press. In those pre-computer days, we used metal type, hand set, to print the titles for TV graphics and commercials.
Eventually I got to do the graphics, some of which had bits of physical animation. This was in the olden days of black and white live TV. Arthur's emphasis was always on fast and cheap. That's actually a little unfair, efficient and economical would be more accurate, but later, when I was working for myself I would always tell clients, "You can

have it fast, cheap, or good. Pick two." They always picked fast and cheap. I inevitably threw in the good since it was as easy to do good work as garbage. I left Videocraft for two years to fulfill my obligations to the draft (fortunately between Korea and Vietnam) and when I returned Arthur had moved uptown and was getting ready to make animated TV programs. In color! One day after Arthur had a spat with the author of his first syndicated series, "The New Adventures of Pinocchio", he came charging into my cubby in the basement. "Peters, can you write?" "Sure," I said. "It's easier than drawing, and there's less to clean up." (I couldn't spell, of course, but I had learned to type in the army.) The real challenge was the format- each half-hour was a single story that had to be made up of five segments that could also stand alone. I also had to design the characters, make the model sheets, design the sets—this was stop-motion puppets, produced in Japan—and storyboards. Because the office was noisy and crowded I told Arthur I wanted to work at home. I wrote, designed, and storyboarded a half an hour episode a week. Arthur had taught me to be efficient and economical. "Pinocchio" was successful and so Arthur did another series, "The Tales of the Wizard of Oz", which I also wrote and designed. It was produced as cel animation in Canada, and I was sent up north to supervise. While I was there, to earn my keep (after all, he was paying my salary and expenses) –I wrote and designed his first feature film, "Willy McBean and his Magic Machine," based on a proposal I had made while I was in the army.

By then Arthur had become a deservedly successful producer of children's films and it became apparent that he didn't need the kid who ran the hot press to write and design his films. Besides I was married, and it was time to make my own way in the world. I left with a whole bunch of pads, some Color Aid paper, a freelance contract to do the storyboards and designs for "Rudolph the red-nosed Reindeer", and an invaluable education in efficiency and economy. My wife used those skills and the talents I had picked up along the way as well as her own formidable talents as a producer and businesswoman to make our endeavor successful.Thank you, Arthur. And, of course, thank you, Adrian."

Candy Kugel, director and founder of Buzzco Associates, remembers:
"As a kid I was always on my belly drawing. Mostly people, but also my cats and doodling. As a teenager I became stage struck. Living in New York City I found that I could usher legitimate theater once I was old enough to work. But I also knew that I was a terrible actor—I knew what I should do to convey the lines, but I could never let myself go and do it. I insinuated myself into high school productions by painting flats and drawing the programs and wishing that I could lose my stage fright. Then in my first year of Rhode Island School of Design I saw that an animator from New York, Jack Zander, was going to give a talk at Brown University. I went there and somewhere in the middle of his sample reel in dawned on me that I could make my drawings act and move—do all the stuff I couldn't do in person. I asked him for a job, I got his business card, then a meeting in New York later that spring where I got a list of animation studios, which led to a summer (unpaid) job as a go-fer at Perpetual Motion that became a ten-year gig which left me flipping ever after."

David Ehrlich, the avant-garde animator whose work has defied boundaries, expectations, and categorization, sent this:
"I had been painting and sculpting for a number of years before I tried doing a bunch of sequential drawings on tracing paper in 1974 and single framed them with my old regular 8mm camera. What came back from the corner drug store ten days later literally stunned me. After years of trying to get my artwork to move with tiny gears and Tinker Toy motors, these ten seconds of very primitive animation seemed the answer to everything I had been searching for. Within a year clay and canvasses were gathering dust in the closet while pads of tracing paper covered tables, chairs, bed and floor. But this was personal, private work. I had no idea how REALLY to do animation. What I was doing didn't look like anything else I had seen on TV or even in those early MoMA shows, and I was very shy about showing it to anyone other than my wife, Marcela, who started to worry I'd end up sitting on a Bowery sidewalk hawking brown, wrinkled tracing paper. I was given Howard Beckerman's name, and after procrastinating for over half a year I called, made an appointment, put on a clean shirt and trudged down to his SVA office with my 8mm projector and 3 minutes of scratched up film. Howard looked like a very cool guy with the beard and the big toothy smile and his warmth put me more at ease that I thought I'd be. He immediately said, "Okay, let's see the opus." I set up, the lights went off, and the film played. The lights went on, there was a silence, and I asked Howard what I should do. The following conversation roughly took place. I'm an old guy now so my memory isn't great, but Howard's even older, with worse memory traces, so let's go with my version.
Howard: Whaddya mean, what should you do?
David: I mean, I'm working ON TRACING PAPER.
Howard: Yeah, and that's what's so great.
David: But these aren't characters. There's no story.
Howard: Do you want to animate a story?
David: No.
Howard: Then don't make a story.
David: But how can I make commercials?
Howard: Do you want to make commercials?
David: Not really.
Howard: (LAUGHS) Then just keep doing what you're doing. It'll work out. This is great stuff.
And Howard introduced me to George Griffin, whose "Head" had inspired me to be even more personal than I had been in my animation and who invited me to his monthly Independent Animators meetings where I saw the fantastic work being done by all his friends who became my friends. And I kept going to visit Howard and Iris in their studio for many years to come, and was always warmly welcomed and supported in my work."

Andrea Breitman, independent animator and ASIFA board member, passed this along:
"Believe it or not, what inspired me to want to step into the world of animation was watching all that old footage of animators, particularly the Looney Tunes crew (as well as the Disney guys), acting out characters…bringing them to life… The enthusiasm and drive those guys had were enough to inspire me for life. I guess what I saw was the excuse to goof off with a purpose! That's what really did it for me!"

My heartfelt thanks to those who shared their memories and experiences with me for this column. If there are any of you out there who'd like to pass along their feelings or thoughts, I'd be glad to hear from you. You can send your stories or tidbits to me at richgorey@hotmail.com

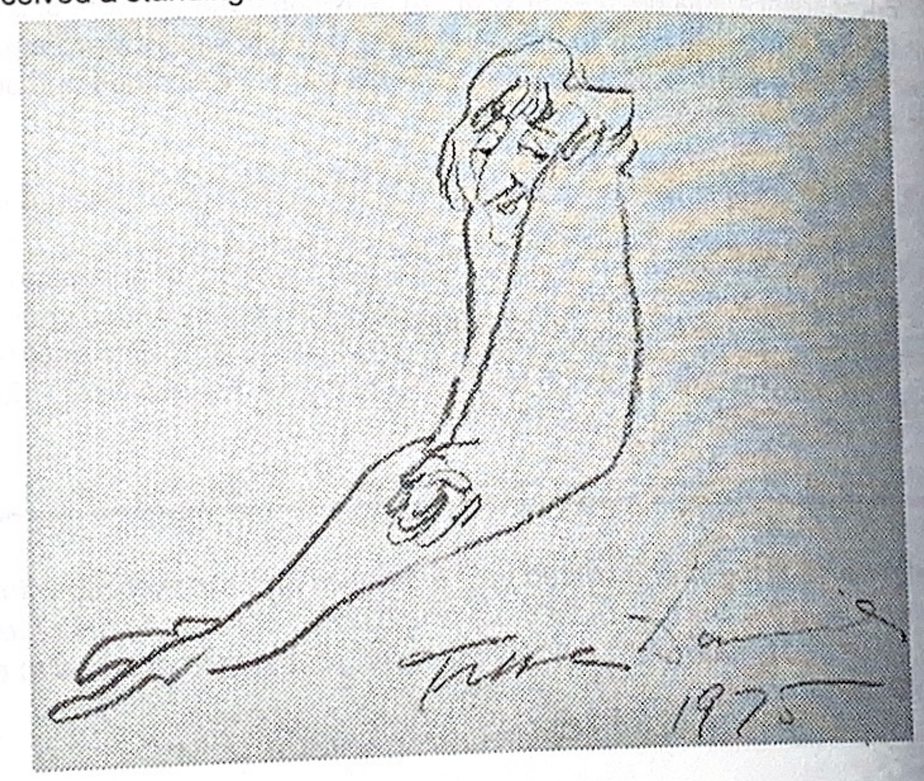
Report on AN EVENING WITH TISSA DAVID at New York's Museum of Modern Art January 18,2003.

Braving 18 degree cold weather, an audience of nearly 500 attended a warm tribute to legendary animator Tissa David at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Among them were animators Michael Sporn, Jimmy Picker, Tony Eastman, Robert Marionetti, Jennifer Oxley, Dan Kanemoto, Howard and Iris Beckerman, and Candy Kugel; political cartoonist Mark Alan Stamaty, book designers Holly McNeely (WALT DISNEY'S NINE OLD MEN; PAPER DREAMS; BEFORE THE ANIMATION BEGINS) and Liney Li (CHUCK AMUCK; CHUCK REDUCKS); animation designer Dan Haskett (who flew in from the west coast especially for the show); and designer/director R.O. Blechman, whose Ink Tank animation studio enjoyed a MoMA retrospective the night before.

The event included an introductory lecture with illustrations by John Canemaker, co-curator of the evening with MoMA archivist Josh Siegel. Ms. David was interviewed on stage by Mr. Canemaker interspersed with screenings of examples of her work (whole and excerpted) from the last sixty years. Films included the EGGS, COCKABOODY, EVERYBODY RIDES THE CAROUSEL; RAGGEDY ANN & ANDY; THE MARZIPAN PIG; TERROR FACES MAGOO; THE GREAT FROST (from SIMPLE GIFTS), various TV commercials, and a pencil test reel from the forthcoming Ink Tank feature CANDIDE.

Plus excerpts from two features Ms. David directed: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (1989) for Holland Television and London's Channel Four, and BONJOUR PARIS (1953). For the latter film, Ms. David broke new ground as a female director in the male-dominated animation industry. Ms. David spoke candidly and with humor about her remarkable career, her mentorship with the legendary animator Grim Natwick, her struggles as a woman artist, and her love of animation. "If you're not prepared to put yourself completely into animation, don't bother doing it," she advised. "Because you must be willing to give yourself completely over to the work."

At the end of the evening, Mr. Canemaker led the audience in singing "Happy Birthday" to celebrate Ms. David recently turning 82.
She received a standing ovation.



Screening: Academy-Nominated Films

This month's portion of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences program includes nominations from 2002 in the categories of Animated Shorts, Live-Action Shorts, and Documentary Shorts. Program details will follow the announcement of the nominations on February 11.

Organized by Laurence Kardish, Senior Curator, Department of Film and Media. Animated and Live-Action Shorts. **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1:00**

Paul Power, Senior Film and Media Publicist
MoMA Film at The Gramercy Theatre
Tel: 212-708-9847 Fax: 212-708-9691
paul_power@moma.org
www.moma.org

MoMA Film at The Gramercy Theatre is located at 127 East 23 Street (at Lexington Avenue), New York. Box office: (212) 777-4900

On this Valentine's Day,
Do Something Different
Filthy Fest:
New Yorks Dirtiest Animation
Presented by Animators, Ink.
Hosted by Signe Baumane
At The Millenium 66 East 4th Street
Show Time - 7:30 Admission - $5.00
Please arrive early as seating may be limited
Entry Info: (212) 577-0383 or
Filthy@AnimatorsInk.com

2003 ASIFA-East Animated Film Festival Entry Form

CONTACT NAME _____ CONTACT PHONE NUMBER _____

TITLE OF ENTRY _____

LENGTH _____

IMPORTANT: If entry is over 15 minutes, you must provide a 5-10 minute excerpt for judging and screening purposes *in addition* to the full piece. While every attempt will be made to screen entries in full, due to timing considerations, ASIFA-East reserves the right to screen excerpts.

FORMAT ☐ VHS 1/2" cassette ☐ 3/4" U-matic videocassette

OTHER FORMATS WILL **NOT** BE ACCEPTED.

CREDITS

PRODUCTION COMPANY / AFFILIATED SCHOOL _____

DIRECTOR(S) _____

ANIMATOR(S) _____

DESIGNER _____

WRITTEN BY _____

COMPOSER _____

"NOTE" THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR AWARD CERTIFICATES. PLEASE FILL OUT CLEARLY AND NEATLY.

FEES

STUDENT
☐ $ 5.00

COMMERCIALS & PROMOS
☐ $ 20.00 ASIFA member
☐ $ 30.00 Non member

INDEPENDENT FILMS
☐ $ 25.00 ASIFA member
☐ $ 35.00 Non member

SPONSORED FILMS OVER 2 MIN.
☐ $ 25.00 ASIFA member
☐ $ 35.00 Non member

Payable by non-refundable check only, made out to ASIFA-East. Check must accompany entry.

☐ I hereby give ASIFA-East permission to include my film in a reel or tape to be circulated for ASIFA-East screenings in the year following the festival.

Having read the above form and entry instructions and filled it out in full, I hereby submit my film to the ASIFA-East annual animated film festival.

Entrant's Signature _____ Entrant's Printed Name _____

Make sure your package includes this completed **entry form**, a **check** made out to ASIFA-East for entry fees, a clearly labeled entry, and *if over 15 minutes long*, a clearly labeled excerpt on a **separate tape.**

For official ASIFA use only

PLEASE NOTE: This form will be used for award and return information. Please read this form *very carefully*, and fill it out *fully* before submitting your entry.

THE SMALL PRINT

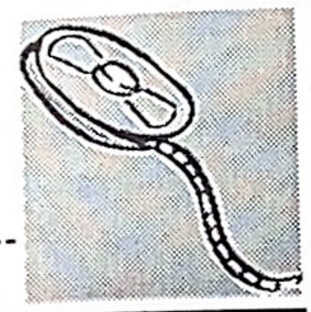
1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Film must be produced after **July 1, 2001**, and must be received no later than Monday **March 3, 2003** accompanied by completed entry form. Film must not have been entered previously. Obtain additonal information by calling **Linda Simensky at 404-885-0821.** Xeroxes of blank forms are acceptable.

2. **AWARD CATEGORIES:** 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes for overall excellence will be given within each of the entry classifications: *Student Films, Commercial & Promos, Independent Films,* and *Sponsored Films Over 2 Minutes.* Student Films will also be eligible for two honorable mention awards. Commercials, Promos, Independent Films, and Sponsored Films over 2 minutes will be eligible for Best In Show designation. In addition, craft awards may be given out within classifications. **The decision in all categories will be final.** All awards will be made by judges selected by the Awards Committee, and will be based on results of judging by the membership of ASIFA-East.

3. **DISCLAIMER:** ASIFA-East will not be responsible for prints lost in the mail, or for damage incurred in projection, although ASIFA-East will agree to take all reasonable care when screening prints. ASIFA-East will not be responsible for infringements of rights of prints accepted for screening by the jury.

4. **MAILING INSTRUCTIONS:** All entries should be clearly labeled with film title and production company. Not responsible for damage to prints in transit. All entries will be returned via parcel post, unless other arrangements are made with ASIFA-East. **Mail or Deliver** to: ASIFA-EAST AWARDS COMMITTEE, C/O DAVE LEVY/BLUE'S CLUES, 1633 BROADWAY, 4TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10019.
Due to heightened security, please make sure packages are clearly labeled, as they will be inspected prior to delivery.

5. QUESTIONS?: Please contact: **Linda Simensky** at **404-885-0821, Nancy Keegan** at **860-651-1128** or **Dave Levy** at **212-654-6859.**



FILMS
MON. MAR 3

JUDGING
MAR. 11-17

FESTIVAL
MAY

RETURN ENTRY TO:

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

_____

_____ OF _____ ENTRIES

ASIFA festival FAQ

by Nancy Keegan Lennert

I have been involved with the festival for over 10 years now, and have served as a co-chair since 1997. In that time, I have fielded a number of calls regarding the festival, and have noticed that the same questions keep cropping up year after year. As a public service, I thought I'd provide a festival FAQ, to answer many of the most common questions.

Why weren't you able to....?
The festival is run by volunteers. In order to manage a project of such a magnitude in our spare time, we have to set limits. In addition to the deadlines for entries, we have internal deadlines of when things have to be finished, so that the festival is ready in time. Most of the time, we are able to solve problems well in advance of these deadlines, but each year there are 2 or 3 issues that arise too late for us to be able to address them. If you have any questions, requests, concerns, or needs, it is your responsibility to contact us ASAP. We can not help you with your issues if we do not know they exist. 95% of the time we are able to accommodate your needs in some fashion. You can contact Dave Levy at 212-654-6859, Nancy Keegan Lennert at 860-651-1128, or Linda Simensky at 404-885-0821.

My film isn't going to be back from the editor until the day before the judging, can I still enter it?
If you are in the final stages of post-production, and would like to enter this year's festival, send in your entry form with a dummy tape. Indicate on your entry form that you will need to swap tapes at the screening. You will then be responsible for arriving at the screening at least 15 minutes early and arranging the tape swap. Please note, your entry fee is NON-REFUNDABLE, so if there is a chance that you will not be finished by the judging date, you should wait until the following year to enter. Films can only be entered in the ASIFA festival once, so do not enter works-in-progress.

How do you determine screening order?
One of the biggest curiosities about the festival is how screening order for judging is determined. First we look at entry length. We schedule longer films at the beginning and end of a screening. This is because at the beginning of judging night, many people arrive late. By starting with longer pieces, late arrivals still have a chance to see as many of the entries as possible. Similarly, we end with longer pieces, because it allows people who need to leave early the chance to view and score as many pieces as possible, while still screening the entire piece for those who can stay.

If your piece has a runtime of over 15 minutes, we do request that you submit an excerpt of your piece on a separate tape. In some years, we have so many long entries that it is impossible to screen them all in their entirety, so all longer films must be excerpted. By submitting your own excerpted tape, you can make sure the judging audience sees your strongest work from the piece.

Once we have placed the longer films, we then look at studios or filmmakers with multiple entries. We try not to have back-to-back entries from the same studio, so when multiple films are entered from one filmmaker, we spread them out evenly through the category.

Finally we take the remaining film entries, and once again look at film length. We try to vary the times so that longer entries are evenly scheduled with shorter entries. Films are not pre-screened, so we do not base screening order on content in any fashion.

The sorting process is open to anyone who wants to volunteer their services. Please contact Dave Levy at david.levy@nick.com if you are interested in helping out.

How are the winners determined?
In each category, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Places are determined by the average overall score of each entry. This is determined by adding all votes cast for that film, then dividing it by the quantity of votes. So if film A receives a total of 50 points from 10 votes (an average of 5), while film B receives a total of 24 points from 3 votes (an average of 8), film B would score higher in the results. We also use these averages to determine the best film overall in the festival. As for the accuracy of these results, they are calculated by an outside accountant, not by the festival staff.

Craft awards are given to films that did not place in their category, but were repeatedly singled out for excellence in certain craft categories. When more than one film is noted by the audience, we do award more than one craft award. When there is no dominant film in a craft category, no award is given.

The President's award is chosen by the executive board of ASIFA. It is given to someone who has been a SUPPORTER of independent animated filmmaking. If you know someone that you feel has contributed greatly to the animated film community, please feel free to contact the executive board to let them know about that person.

The Samu awards are managed and chosen by an outside committee, who attend the judgings and determine finalists and winners through their own set of criteria.

Why was the quality of John Smith's film so bad at the final screening?
Our editor works very hard to make sure that levels and picture quality remain as high as possible, and that sound levels are consistent from film to film. When we discover problems, we try and contact the filmmaker as soon as possible to obtain a better quality tape. Many filmmakers who can't afford to part with their better dubs for the duration of the festival choose to send a 1/2" for judging, but they note on their entry form that they have a better quality dub available if needed for editing. We can accommodate these arrangements, but please note it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to inform us that you would like to provide another tape and to send us the alternative tape in a timely manner.

Will I be receiving an award at the festival? What is it for?
As a courtesy, we do send out "Please be represented" postcards to winning entries. These cards are mailed to the address listed on the entry form. No other information regarding prizes will be released prior to the festival, so do not call to ask what prize you will be receiving.

Can I get a tape of the festival? Can I get a copy of John Smith's film?
The short answer: No. The long answer: The festival is screened for other ASIFA chapters around the country, and the Donnell Film Center. Other than those screenings, we do NOT screen the festival, nor will we provide copies of any individual films entered. If you are interested in a particular film, we will put you in touch with the filmmaker directly.

I hope that this FAQ helps answer any questions you may have regarding the festival. The ASIFA Festival Staff works very hard to put on a great film festival each year, and I think you will agree that their efforts pay off in the end. Hope to see you all this year!

??? and AAA 20 Questions for Mr. Warburton

by Dave Levy

Mr. Tom Warburton, creator of the super hot animated Cartoon Network series Code Name: Kids Next Door, was kind enough to sit still and answer our twenty questions. All he asked in return was that you be kind enough to sit still and read the answers. Please enjoy....20 Questions for Mr. Warburton:

1-Did you end up working in Animation by accident or was it always part of your plan?

I originally went to school to become a graphic designer. I hated it. When a friend asked me "what would be the job that I'd laugh at being paid to do" I said making cartoons. "Then that's what you HAVE to do," she said. And NOW look at the mess I'm in. Man, if I ever find her she's in BIG trouble.

2-Is there one (or a few cartoons) that inspired you most?

I got into Japanese animation really early in life. The comic book shop I haunted (nerd!) sold really crappy bootlegs with no translations that I watched over and over and over again (double nerd!). It wasn't until much later in life that I realized I had been watching Hayao Miyazaki. My favorite was "Laputa" and I had NO idea what was happening, but I loved it more than anything. I think that also inspired me to eventually learn Japanese (albeit remedially).

3-Describe your work history in the industry from the beginning up to landing your own series. What critical things did you learn along the way and where?

Well, in 1990 the kind folks at Buzzco gave me my first job where I learned all the basics. Every night after work Vinnie Cafarelli and I would sit down with a bottle of champagne, a pack of cigarettes and he'd say "alright, tonight you learn about exposure sheets!" I was only there 10 months but I learned YEARS worth of invaluable stuff.

Then I had my first big studio job at Jumbo working as an asst. layout artist on the first season of Doug. I LOVED the energy, the people, and the pace of working on a series. I learned the basics of making a series there and watched my drawing improve a bit.

After that I wound up as the first staff artist at JJ Sedelmaier's and stayed for 5 years. I started out doing asst. animation but by the time I left I had been the production designer on the first season of Beavis and Butthead, created the opening for an Asifa festival, animated and directed episodes of Schoolhouse Rock, TV Funhouse and tons of commercial stuff. I really became a film maker while I was at JJ's and learned so much by constantly working in different styles.

I left there to work at home as the character designer for Disney's Pepper Ann and because my pitch for Kenny and the Chimp had been green lit to pilot by Cartoon Network. Eventually I went out to LA for 3 months to make Kenny and a year or so later went back out to make the pilot for Kids Next Door.

While I waited to find out whether KND would become a series I got hired to direct on the 2nd season of Mo Willem's Sheep In the Big City at Curious Pictures. Mo and I really hit it off and I learned a lot about making a series...both things that I wanted to do, and things I'd want to change if I got one.

Sheep got cancelled and Kids Next Door was picked by viewers to be CN's next series at around the same time. I decided to do the show at Curious and most of Sheep's production staff, a couple of the artists, and even Mr. Willems came on over to help out on KND!

4- Was there a moment where your drawing, acting and timing as an animator really clicked and you first felt confident in what you were doing?

Unfortunately I'm always saying the same thing when I work and it's usually something like: "holy shit, I hope this works!". It's a really good feeling when it does.

5-A lot of NY people first got to see your sense of humor in the festival opener that you did for Asifa while at JJ Sedelmaier. Can you describe how that was created? What was your role in that project? I've heard a lot of juicy stories, like the one about deliberately getting the cells as dirty as possible!

Working at Sedelmaier's was great, but grueling. Commercial animation schedules are completely insane and after some marathon projects I was majorly burnt. I took a week off and really didn't know how I was going to get back into things when magically J.J. called me at home and said he had run into then asifa-east mega president Linda Simensky (now there was a REAL president) at a festival. When he asked her how he could help Asifa she suggested that he produce an animated opening for the animation festival. So J.J. said okay, and gave me carte blanche (why a white card!?!?) to write it, design it, direct and storyboard it...whatever I wanted. He said he didn't even want to see it until it was done! it was just the shot of adrenaline I needed and an amazing learning experience. so many people generously donated their time and services to the project that I STILL can't thank them enough. HUGE props go out to J.J. for that opportunity.

So I did the film like an old black and white horror film trailer. To make it look really old we were deliberately messy with the cels. When high powered Asifa Executive Board member Jen Oxley offered to do some painting she warned me that her cats might get hair on the cels and I was like "NO...THAT'S GREAT! Let 'em crap on the cels if they want!"

And Dave...if you think getting cels as dirty as possible is a "juicy" story, I think you need a little more spice in your life. Yeeesh.

6-You've successfully pitched two concepts to Cartoon Network that have been produced. Can you describe how those shows were pitched? What materials did you present?
I like to come up with a colorful 10 or 12 page booklet that really describes the world I'm trying to pitch. Not too many words, not too many pictures. Short, sweet and to the point.
Once I finished them I just mailed them on down to the development people at CN. The rest was all done over the phone and at my drawing desk and computer...but not quickly, mind you. Development always takes a long time, and generally, that's a good thing. Every show needs time to be developed.

7-Was the fact that there was not one central character in your KND pitch ever an issue for the network brass?
Not really. Their main concern was whether having numbers instead of names would make it hard to know who's who. I think they finally relented when I flopped down on the floor and started crying.

8-Can you compare the two separate experiences of making your first pilot, Kenny and the Chimp, and your second for Code Name: The Kids Next Door? I understand that you roughed out much of the animation for Kenny, yourself. Was this the case for TKND as well?
With Kenny and the chimp I suddenly found myself out in LA, being told what to do, and how to do it. Everyday I learned eleventy billion new things and then went home to bed and stared at the ceiling saying "hoooooly shit, what just happened?" When I went out to do KND it was so much easier because I KIND OF (slightly?) knew what I was doing. That of course didn't stop me from crying myself to sleep some nights due to shear terror over whether it would turn out okay.
I roughed out 80% of the animation for Kenny because I had never sent anything overseas before and I was scared about how it would turn out. It was really hard...and probably pretty stupid. Korea would have done a better job. Don't tell anyone, but I'm not really that great of an animator. You're not printing this are you?

9- Did you notice any major differences between NY and LA studio practices or techniques?
Well, even though I had worked on a couple series here in NYC, they had it down to a science out there. This was good because they really knew how to make cartoons, and bad because if you remotely deviated from the "way it was done" people's heads started falling off, they started spouting blood from their ears and running around in circles screaming for the police. People are also a lot less concerned with deadline out there whereas NYC has always put the "dead" in deadline.
But I learned SO much from some great people in LA. if you ever have an opportunity to work out there for a little while I highly recommend it.

10- You rubbed shoulders with some pretty legendary characters and newer hot-shots while working in LA. What were the highlights for you?
While I was at Hanna Barbera working on Kenny, my office was right next to Bill Hanna's! He'd stop in every couple days and look at my drawings and give me advice. Every day when he'd leave I'd get a "good night, Tom" and I'd just be like "this is SO cooooooool!" You could just walk into Joe Barbera's office to talk with him whenever you wanted! Unbelievable.
I'm also a big fan of Genndy Tartakovsky and Craig McCracken so I was really amped to be able to finally meet them!
I became really good friends with Greg Miller (Robot Jones) and Adam Burton (Grim and Evil) while I was out there. We were all working on our pilots at the same time and Linda Simensky called us the "Cartoon Network Pennsylvania Farm Team" because we had all lived there at some point in our lives. And now we all have a series on CN! I miss those guys and still talk to them as much as I can.

11-You conceived and pitched the idea of Code Name: The Kids Next Door while the paint was still drying on Kenny and The Chimp... was this because you knew that Kenny and The Chimp was not going to go forward?
Well, some people at CN really liked Kenny and some people didn't. I didn't know what would happen so I came up with plan B and dropped KND on their desks the day Kenny aired. I guess I'll never know, but I sometimes wonder if maybe KND helped squash Kenny. To be honest, I'm glad Kenny didn't get picked up back then. I wasn't ready yet, probably would have had to move out to LA and ended up with a so-so show that I had no control over.

12-Where did the idea for Code Name: The Kids Next Door come from? Are you secretly anti-adult? Tell the truth!
My parents were very much of the "adults know better" school. I was taught to believe that teachers and grown ups had all the answers but as I got older I began to realize that a large portion of adults were just winging it through life or worse, were just plain stupid. Not all of them, mind you...it was just that I realized they were human and could screw up just like me (which I did a lot).
As to the question of whether I'm secretly anti-adult I'd like to whole heartedly deny that. I am BLATANTLY anti-adult.

13-Describe the unique way that Code Name: The Kids Next Door episodes are written and what the storyboard artist's role is in that.
Well, I wouldn't call it unique. Generally, it starts with an idea like "what if adults raised the drinking age of soda up to 13". From there I'll toss ideas around with super powered head writing hierophant (look it up..I had to) Mo Willems. Then whoever is writing the show beats it out on index cards and then 'pitches' the show to around 5 of us. Someone invariably says "I don't get it" and we all spend an hour or so trying to make it work. From there the writer writes an 8 page, very detailed outline of the 11 minute story. It goes through 3 drafts and then we send it to CN. After they say "I don't get it", we fix it up, finally get it approved, and then it goes over to the storyboard thumbnail artist (who pretends like he or she gets it) to make the rough board. They've got the story, but they go in and flesh it out, add more dialogue and jokes, and generally make us say "WOW!". After Mo and I make notes on the rough board, it goes to the storyboard assistant (if they say they don't get it, they get fired) who makes it into a super beautiful amazing storyboard!

14-How do you know what will be funny for children in a cartoon?
Usually I just grab a small child off the street and violently shake them upside down and scream "WHAT'S SO FUNNY!?!?!!". But that never works so I'm trying to find a different way to find out what's funny.

15- What has been your experience with focus group testing? Have you been present for any testing?
When I went to one of the sessions for Kenny, Terry Kalagian (then head of focus testing for CN) totally blew me away by just LOOKING at the kids and rattling off what they'd say about the cartoons! Things like, "that girl there...she won't like professor XXXL because he's mean to Kenny". BOOM! She nailed it every time. It really is a sociological experiment with alpha males, herd mentality, etc etc. The kids all liked my cartoon so that made the experience pleasant rather than a suicidal event.

16- Where does your drawing style come from? It seems to have a little bit of that "rubber hose" design style from the early 1930s.
France? No, YUGOSLAVIA! Wait...my drawing style? Can you repeat the question?

16A- Where does your drawing style come from? It seems to have a little bit of that "rubber hose" design style from the early 1930s.
um...it comes from my pencil? or sometimes a pen.

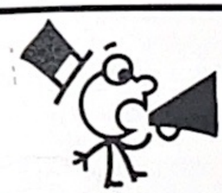
16B- Stop being stupid and answer the question, please.
I think I'm just screwing around because I don't know the answer to that question. A lot of people tell me that there's some Fleischer-ness to the limbs of my characters. When I was in college my mom saw a 7-UP commercial with Fido Dido and thought that he looked like one of my drawings. When I finally saw it I was like, "ooooooooh...I wanna work on THAT!". Years later I was working on Fido and Pepper Ann! Susan Rose kicks large amounts of butt.

17- Are you still the Designer for Pepper Ann? I understand you did that work from home, fedexing your art to LA. What was that experience like?
Pepper Ann finished up, like, YEARS ago. Where have YOU been, Levy? But what a great experience that was. After working out in White Plains at Sedelmaier's for 5 years I was ready for a change and working from home was perfect. It allowed me to work on Kenny and KND freely, take Japanese lessons, catch a movie in the middle of the day, etc. It did get boring after a while though. I was eager to work with people again.

18- What part of producing your show gives you the most pleasure? What part the least?
Working with a team of incredibly talented people is my favorite part. You always want to hire people who are better than you, (in my case that wasn't that daunting of a task) but I've ended up with some absolutely unbelievable artists like Kim Ardnt, Guy Moore, Tom Evans and Gideon Kendall. But it's not just the artists that make it fun. The super solid production staff totally make my day, every day.
The part I like least is the bullshit. There's always politics and as the creator of a show, you become a politician whether you like it or not. It's hard enough to produce a series, but it seems like there's ALWAYS something that's gotta be dealt with. But it always ends up alright in the long run.

19- For all the potential members and newcomers to the industry out there, what part has Asifa-East played in your career and in getting you where you are today?
Aside from the power, fame and enormous paycheck I make as a high powered Asifa Executive Board Member, Asifa has always been, for me, about meeting people and getting to see films. That and the challenge of trying to overthrow the current president of Asifa. Oops....I...um, mean trying to HELP the current president to the best of my ability.
Aaaaanyway, the saying "It's not WHAT you know but WHO you know" is no joke, so having the opportunity to meet other people in the business who might hook you up with a job later on in life is nothing to sneeze at. Sneezing at people isn't very nice, anyway.

20-What are your feelings on the current state of the animation industry? Will it make a positive turnaround anytime soon and how does New York fit into it all?
I'm incredibly lucky to be having such a high point in my career at such a low point in the job marketplace. There's really not a lot of work out there right now and I'm glad that KND has given some people the opportunity to keep working. I think things will turn around, though. It's a big cycle and one day it will wheel back around to new York. But I really think more and more people will be sending and receiving work over the internet and through fed-ex to get jobs done. Personally I think it's better to have everyone in one studio so they can brainstorm ideas together (you should hear some of the stuff the KND design department comes up with) but more and more places don't want the overhead of a big studio.
In the meantime, I'm just gonna keep trudgin' along on KND and saying "holy shit, I hope this works!" over and over again.



ANNOUNCEMENT

"MUTANT ALIENS" TO BE RELEASED ON DVD THIS SPRING

Bill Plympton's 2002 animated feature "Mutant Aliens" is scheduled for a release on DVD this spring. "Mutant Aliens" tells the story of Earl Jensen, an stranded astronaut who returns after 20 years with an army of aliens to get revenge on Dr. Frubar, the space-industry tycoon.
The film was an entry in the Sundance Film Festival in 2001 and won the Grand Prize at the 2001 Annecy Animation Festival. The DVD will also contain "The Plympton Diaries", a multi-part behind-the-scenes look at the entire creation of the film.
The film is being released by IndieDVD, who also recently released the DVD special edition of "Plymptoons", with special introduction, commentaries, and Plympton rarities.
For more info, check out: http://www.indiedvd.com/

TWO NEW BOOKS FROM BILL PLYMPTON

This March, NBM Publishing is releasing the graphic novel of "Hair High", which will be the basis of Bill's next animated feature, due in 2004. "Hair High" is a teen comedy, dead-lover's revenge horror parody set in a 1960's high-school.
Also being released is "Sloppy Seconds", the 3rd compilation of Bill's print cartoons from major magazines, with a few special bonus chapters.

Advance copies of "Sloppy Seconds" are available at:

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DVD Release!
John Canemaker: Marching to a Different Toon
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For more than two decades John Canemaker has created films that charm, enlighten and touch audiences. His "toons" (which have been featured in everything from The World According to Garp to Pee-wee's Playhouse) are often daring, frequently hilarious and always compassionate. Showcasing Canemaker's wide-ranging talent and emotional resonance, Marching to a Different Toon includes his animation classics: the whimsical Confessions of a Stardreamer, the astonishingly lovely Bottom's Dream, the clever and witty Confessions of a Stand-Up, the enchanting The Wizard's Son, and the wondrously beautiful Bridgehampton.

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